

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q1: What is Boots to Business?

A1: Boots to Business (B2B) is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a training track within the Department of Defense's revised Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The curriculum provides valuable assistance to transitioning Service members exploring business ownership or other self employment opportunities by leading them through the key steps for evaluating business concepts and providing the foundational knowledge required to develop a business plan. In addition, participants are introduced to SBA resources available to help access start up capital and additional technical assistance. Boots to Business is delivered in partnership with SBA Resource Partners [Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs), and SCORE] and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University. It is available free of charge at participating installations to Service members and their spouses transitioning or retiring from the U.S. military.

The Boots to Business course has three parts: 1) The Entrepreneurship Track Overview – an introductory video shown during the mandatory five day TAP GPS course; 2) Introduction to Entrepreneurship – a two-day classroom course offered as one of three additional TAP tracks; and, 3) Foundations of Entrepreneurship – an eight-week instructor-led online course that offers in-depth instruction on the elements of a business plan and tips and techniques for starting a business.

Q2: When did Boots to Business begin?

A2: Boots to Business began as a pilot initiative in July 2012. The pilot's success allowed SBA to an Initial Operating Capability (IOC) in 2013 by expanding to offer entrepreneurship education at military installations across the country. In 2014, Boots to Business was funded for the first time in the federal budget to expand to Full Operational Capability (FOC) by increasing its frequency and geographic reach to overseas locations.

Since 2013 – the first full year of Boots to Business – over 20,000 transitioning Service members, including many spouses, participated in the two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship class on over 165 military installations worldwide.

Q3: What is "TAP" or Transition GPS and how is it related to Boots to Business?

A3: The Department of Defense launched a revised Transition Assistance Program in 2012 to better prepare Service members for post service life and careers. Part of the new TAP is curriculum known as Transition Goals, Plans, Success (Transition GPS), which provides Service members with additional training tracks to assist with their transition to civilian life. The Boots to Business Entrepreneurship Track is one of Transition GPS's training tracks provided by the SBA for Service members interested in business ownership or other self-employment as a career option. (Additional tracks focus on higher education and technical/vocational training.)

Q4: How did SBA and Boots to Business become part of Transition GPS?

A4: Data showing veterans' suitability for entrepreneurship informed the decisions of two joint task forces formed by Presidential Executive Orders in 2010 and 2011 and led to the creation of Boots to Business – The Veterans Employment Initiative Task Force (VEI) led by the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Interagency Task Force on Veterans Small Business Development led by the U.S. Small Business Administration. These joint task forces were charged to develop proposals to maximize the career readiness of all Service members and to better support veteran-owned small businesses. They are also responsible for making recommendations to assure the implementation of Boots to Business, among other initiatives, and provide annual progress reports to the President.



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The Administration, the task forces, and the SBA recognize that transitioning veterans possess the training, experience, and leadership skills to start businesses and create jobs. The most recent U.S. Census recorded 2.45 million veteran-owned businesses employing 5.793 million individuals and representing 9 percent of all U.S. firms. Veterans are 45 percent more likely to be self-employed than those with no military experience.

The SBA will continue supporting veterans as they start and grow businesses and create jobs. By working with SBA's Resource Partners [Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs), and SCORE] and the IVMF to deliver entrepreneurship education, the SBA provides transitioning Service members with the knowledge and resources they need to evaluate business opportunities and become successful entrepreneurs. SBA helps veterans get started and connects them to the SBA Resource Partner network for support throughout the life-cycle of their businesses. (Boots to Business classes are only taught by SBA Partners and employees.)

Q5: Who can attend Boots to Business?

A5: Boots to Business has been designed specifically for transitioning Service members. It caters to all pay grades, enlisted and officer, as well as military spouses. Participants include Service members transitioning after initial service commitments all the way through those retiring from a career of service.

Q6: How can a Service member find out when/where a Boots to Business class is scheduled?

A6: Service members wishing to participate in B2B should speak with their Transition Assistance Program (TAP) coordinator and/or career advisor to learn more about Boots to Business. Additional information and schedules can also be found at www.sba.gov/bootstobusiness.

Q7: Is there a cost to attending Boots to Business?

A7: No, there is no cost to B2B participants. SBA is the government sponsor for Boots to Business.

Q8: What does the Boots to Business curriculum cover?

A8: The three-part entrepreneurial track is offered by SBA, its Resource Partners, and Syracuse University and includes:

1. THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRACK OVERVIEW

An informational video shown during the core TAP course introduces entrepreneurship as a post-service career option.

2. INTRODUCTION TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP TWO-DAY COURSE

A two-day course offered as an additional TAP class for those interested in learning more about the opportunities and challenges of business ownership. Subject matter experts and practitioners from SBA and its network of Partners teach the course at over 165 military installations worldwide. Participants learn business fundamentals and techniques for evaluating the feasibility of their business concepts.

3. FOUNDATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE

Upon completion of Introduction to Entrepreneurship class, transitioning Service members and their spouses can elect to further their study through an instructor guided high-touch eight-week online course taught by professors from a consortium of accredited universities led by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University. By dedicating a minimum of ten hours per week to connected and independent study, participants work through the fundamentals of developing an actionable business plan.

After completing Boots to Business, participants will have the tools and knowledge they need to identify a business opportunity, draft a business plan, and launch their enterprise.



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Q9: Can I take the Foundations of Entrepreneurship eight-week online course without participating in the two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship?

A9: Foundations of Entrepreneurship (the eight-week online curriculum) for Boots to Business builds on the training provided during the two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship course. At the completion of Introduction to Entrepreneurship, participants are provided with registration information for the Foundations of Entrepreneurship course.

Q10: Why is it important for aspiring veteran entrepreneurs to develop a feasibility study and business plan?

A10: SBA delivers B2B with the support of its district offices and Resource Partners, such as the Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers (WBCs) and SCORE. With a feasibility study and business plan in hand, SBA's district offices and Resource Partners can better match veteran entrepreneurs to SBA programs that will help them grow their businesses. Also, a business plan is normally required to be considered for lending and other financing programs.

Q11: Beyond Boots to Business, what additional training/mentoring options are available to veteran entrepreneurs?

A11: Beyond the B2B course, SBA's network of Resource Partners offer continued training and mentoring programs to assist veteran entrepreneurs. The SBA's Resource Partners already provide entrepreneurship training to more than 100,000 veterans every year, many of whom are transitioning Service members.



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